

KGB

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Its tentacles still reach around the world, creating mischief,
probing for intelligence, recruiting spies

ON THE MORNING OF October 12, 1957, a 26-year-old Ukrainian named Bogdan Stashinsky stood at the top of a stairway at No. 8 Karlsplatz, a square in the heart of Munich, West Germany. In his hand, he held a newspaper, rolled into a tight cylinder around a tube, eight inches long and three-quarters of an inch thick, containing a glass ampul of cyanide gas.

The street door opened, and Dr. Lev Rebet, the balding, middle-aged editor in chief of the Ukrainian émigré papers, *Ukrainski Samostinik* and *Sucasna Ukraina*, walked in, headed for his office. Stashinsky started down the stairs as Rebet came up. As they passed, Stashinsky pointed the newspaper at Rebet, pressed a trigger, and, with a soft clapping sound, a toxic mist enveloped Rebet's face. The émigré leader fell senseless on the stairs. Stashinsky strode away, pocketing his paper and pausing just long enough to inhale a cyanide antidote.

Rebet, his blood vessels contracted by the poison, moaned for a while and died. His blood vessels then returned to normal size. By the time tenants discovered him, there was no evidence of homicide. A coroner, finding only an inflammation and softening of the coronary arteries, called it heart failure. Stashinsky had committed the perfect crime.

For that, and for the similar "liquidation" of another Ukrainian émigré leader, Stefan Bandera, in Munich on October 15, 1959, Stashinsky was called to Moscow and honored. His boss, Alexander Shelepin, then chief of the KGB, bestowed on him the Order of the Red Banner. The citation, classified secret, was locked in his file. But a dummy, under the seal of the Scientific Research Institute and suitable for framing, hailed his "successful contribution to the solution of an important problem."

But Stashinsky sickened of his role as a paid assassin for the KGB. Even when he had tested his cyanide gun on a dog tied to a tree, it upset him. He defected to West Germany in 1961, confessed, and went to jail under a 13-year sentence at hard labor.

Since then, Big Brother's methods have mellowed a bit. There are fewer incidents of terror abroad. At home, the knock on the door at midnight is gone, and fear is fading from people's hearts.

KGB continues, the most extensive authoritarian police force in the world. With a license to kill, answerable only to the elite of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, it recently gained even broader constitutional power to arrest "enemies of the state." Its primary mission, since it began as the Cheka in the 1917 Revolution, has been to protect the party from the people. Yet, its tentacles reach around the world, probing for intelligence, creating mischief, recruiting spies with blandishments and blackmail.

The KGB—*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*, for "State Security Committee"—is to party members "the sword of the Revolution." Except for the military intelligence service (CRU), which it supersedes, it is the only security-police agency in Russia. If the United States had a counterpart, it would combine

the CIA, FBI, Secret Service and more.

Over the years, the KGB has had many names—Cheka, OGPU, NKVD, MVD—and many chiefs—Felix Dzerzhinsky, Lavrenti Beria, Ivan Serov, Vladimir Semichastny, and now, Yuri Andropov. Changes seem to come whenever notoriety grows insupportable. Yet ill fame clings. Stalin used the service to carry out his purges of the 1930's. Beria was shot by Stalin's successors. Semichastny was fired this year, amid a flurry of exposures and embarrassments. Andropov, 52, tall and scholarly and speaking fluent English, was ambassador to Hungary during the 1956 uprising. Andropov's selection bodes even tighter party control. He is secretary to the party's Central Committee and a close associate of Leonid I. Brezhnev, first secretary of the Communist party.

The Stashinsky killings are, in KGB parlance, "wet affairs"—that is, bloody. They are in the tradition of SMERSH, not a total invention of novelist Ian Fleming's imagination but an actual KGB arm. The real SMERSH—taken from the Russian *Smert Shpionam*, meaning "Death to Spies"—was created to root out traitors in the armed forces. It is known today as the Third Chief Directorate.

M. Sakharovskiy, handles foreign intelligence. In other words, it spies on the world. Most of the dozen or so other directorates are also involved in espionage department, too, just as the First has a Department of Wet Affairs. Throughout the KGB, but especially in the First Directorate, the United States is still *glavni vrag*, the "main enemy." In 1959, the First formed a Department D, for *Dezinformatsiya*, or "Disinformation," whose job is to merchandise lies. Its main target is the CIA, which it blames for everything from its own murders to sterilization of food animals. Department D's favorite weapons are forged documents — books, magazines, letters — that "prove" chicanery by the CIA, State Department, USA, Peace Corps, U.S. armed forces and American political leaders generally. This department, whose chief is Gen. Ivan I. Agayants, has churned up most of the "gas" and "germ warfare" propaganda.

The Second Chief Directorate deals with counter-intelligence. This is where Russian officialdom's almost pathological suspicion of foreigners and creed of secrecy runs purest. Woe betide the targeted tourist in Moscow who forgets to respect the hidden microphones, swipes a hotel towel or even unslings his camera in a forbidden area. Chambermaids, busboys, cabbies—everybody—could be working for Big Brother. And all the usual entrapments await the unwary—blondes, booze or whatever—while the KGB's human engineers stand ready to arrange them, and then ask for "just a little cooperation." One former European government official recently fell victim to this game: A charwoman cajoled his son into taking her picture at a Soviet airport, whereupon the boy was promptly arrested. He was released after the father signed a "routine apology." To this day, the

worried father does not know what he signed away, just what all those Russian words said.

The KGB's other chief directorates cover functional and geographical areas, much as the State Department and other foreign ministries do.

American officials grudgingly admit that the KGB, hampered by few rules or inhibitions, does a good job. "They're as good as anybody," one long-time observer said. "Little gray men, smart as hell." Training can run as long as 11 years. Cooperation with other Soviet-bloc agencies is excellent, which is more than the Western alliance can claim for itself. Sixty percent of the 6,000 or so Soviet officials serving abroad are career KGB or CRU officers. Almost half of the 75 Russian envoys to non-Communist countries are affiliated with KGB or CRU.

Patience is one of the KGB's key attributes. It does not mind setting up a situation, planting an agent and waiting years for him to perform. Col. Rudolf Abel, the nice old photographer in Brooklyn, astounded neighbors when he proved to be a master spy. Konon Molody actually emigrated to another country and assumed its citizenship before casing into espionage. Patience is evident, too, in the way the Soviet Union slowly, relentlessly recruits foreigners as spies. This has paid off in such prize catches as Britain's atomic physicist Klaus Fuchs and diplomat Kim Philby; West Germany's counterspy Heinz Felfe; the Swedish diplomat Stig Wennerstrom and many other Westerners in high government posts.

There are drawbacks and failures too. A fundamental difficulty, says one American, is "suspicion and indigestion." He noted that often KGB agents will spend wild sums to buy clandestinely the material they already have in their files. "They could back a truck up to the Government Printing Office and get what they want, in many cases, but they seem to prefer to skulk around corners for it," he said. He suggested they also suffer from an overabundance of information, available so freely in the West. "It's all there, but they often don't analyze it properly," he said, "perhaps because they've got too much to digest."

That may have been what happened in the Middle East. The CIA analysis hit it exactly—if war came, Israel would win in six days—and President Johnson patterned his "cool" policy accordingly. The Kremlin, presumably advised by the KGB, miscalculated both the chances of war and the Arabs' ability to fight.

In the mistakes department, no fewer than 46 Soviet diplomats at the United Nations have been unmasked since 1956 as KGB or CRU agents, including Ambassador Nikolai Fedorenko, a former KGB official in the Far East. Vladimir Glukhov, head of the Soviet airline *Aeroflot* in the Netherlands, was kicked out as a spy this year, as were other Soviet agents who "blew their cover" in Norway, Italy and elsewhere. In the Congo, exposure came so suddenly for "diplomat" Boris Voronin and a colleague that Voronin had time to eat only two incriminating documents. KGB men need strong stomachs.

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